Tensions in the World of Moon: Twin Peaks, Indigeneity and Territoriality

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Totem pole outside the Martell residence (Episode 21: "Double Play," directed by Uli Edel, written by Scott Frost)

Abstract

Twin Peaks (1990-1991) is almost universally regarded as a ground-breaking cultural phenomenon. The series' innovative production techniques, surrealist aesthetic, its unsettling preoccupation with the irrational, fixation on the illusory character of surfaces and superficial order, and willingness to broach the difficult subject of father-daughter incest have won (and continue to win) critical and scholarly accolades. Yet, as a handful of detractors have pointed out, Mark Frost and David Lynch's televisual brainchild, which centers on FBI agent Dale Cooper's investigations into the rape and murder of seventeen-year-old Laura Palmer, is in some ways glaringly conformist. For all that it spotlights the insidious workings of patriarchy, after all, *Twin Peaks* also exploits an androcentric fascination with sexual violence. And whatever the series' merits as a disruptive foray into

the traditionalist medium of primetime television, its portrayal of a hackneyed, Reaganite vision of middle-class social order besieged by an otherworldly and seemingly omnipresent peril reveals more than a whiff of rearguard conservatism at work. Moreover, despite the show's well-earned reputation for dissident juxtapositions and subversive play, Michael Carroll has shown how it also draws on the deeply sententious literary mythos of the American frontier, complete with (among other things) a homosocial borderland, Cooper as righteous hero, and "good" and "evil" Indians. For a series that "changed television", these are tried-and-true cultural blueprints indeed.

This essay extends Carroll's reading of "good" and "evil" Indians in *Twin Peaks* to focus more pointedly on the series' representation of Native American peoples and iconography, situate these figurations in the semiotic terrain of popular cinema and television, and correlate these tropes with the past and present politics of real-life settler colonialism in Western Washington and elsewhere. I begin by considering the horror elements in the series, particularly the demonic entity BOB, in relation to the settler colonial psychology associated with horror cinema in general, and by contextualising this use of horror typology against the backdrop of settler incursions into Snoqualmie lands from the mid-19th century to the present. I then examine the ways in which *Twin Peaks*' only named Native American character, as white settler ally and Aboriginal mystic, both defuses the existential threat posed by BOB, and lends credence to assumptions underlying projects of indigenous cultural assimilation. Two general themes resonate in the paragraphs that follow. First, I argue that *Twin Peaks*' use of indigenous iconography fits generally in a longer Western televisual, filmic and cultural tradition of making symbols of indigeneity serve patently non-indigenous ends. Second, I suggest that indigenous symbolism lends critical moral and ontological grounding to a narrative otherwise renowned for endlessly deconstructive "parody and pastiche", dimensional ambiguity, and nebulous causality. I conclude by reflecting on how far-reaching transformations in the status of indigenous concerns since the early 1990s, both locally and internationally, not only throw *Twin Peaks*' narratological complicity in issues of territorial and cultural appropriation into sharp relief, but also, with reference to the series' forthcoming third season, underline a tension between answering to the sentiments of nostalgic "Peaksies," on the one hand, versus accommodating a changed – and charged – climate of Native American representation on the other.



BOB approaches Maddy inside the Hayward household (Episode 9: “Coma,” directed by David Lynch, written by Harley Peyton)

The Ghosts of Ghostwood

Twin Peaks partakes of many elements pivotal to the cinematic horror genre: homely innocence juxtaposed with a sinister undercurrent of evil, violence of a supernatural origin, and the victimisation of youth (especially young women), to name a few. The entire 30-episode run, moreover, unfolds against the shadowy backdrop of the aptly-named Ghostwood Forest encompassing the town, the subplot surrounding the development of which runs the length of the series. In an early episode, sheriff Harry Truman hints at the ethereal nature of the evil in Twin Peaks and the identity of Ghostwood’s otherworldly inhabitants. “There’s a sort of evil out there”, he warns Cooper, “something very, very strange in these old woods. Call it what you want. A darkness, a presence. It takes many forms but […] it’s been out there for as long as anyone can remember and we’ve always been here to fight it.”

As Annie Blackburn’s Miss Twin Peaks pageant speech reveals in the series’ penultimate episode, however, this maleficence appears to have an all-too-worldly cause. By way of opposing the development of Ghostwood, Annie quotes the apocryphal words of the 19th-century Duwamish chief Seeathl (also known as Seattle, ca. 1786-1866). “Your dead”, she says:

> *are soon forgotten and never return. Our dead never forget the beautiful world that gave them being. They still love its verdant valleys, its murmuring rivers, its majestic mountains. When the last red man has vanished from this earth, these forests and shores will still hold their spirits. For the Indians love the earth as a newborn loves its mother's heartbeat.*

The section quoted by Annie is a mere fragment of a much longer oration. In one version of the original speech, Seeathl goes on to warn that:

> *When your children's children shall think themselves alone in the fields, the store, the shop, upon the highway, or in the silence of the pathless woods, they will not be alone. […] At night when the streets of your cities and villages will be silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with returning hosts that once filled and still love this beautiful land. The white man will never be alone. Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not powerless. Dead – did I say? There is no death, only a change of worlds.*

This speech has been referred to as a "ghost story like no other". Indeed, the visual prominence of Aboriginal symbolism throughout *Twin Peaks*, from the Plains Indian iconography exhibited in Johnny Horne's headdress and the statue beside Cooper's bed, to the series' near ubiquitous use of Pacific Northwest murals and totem poles, invests Annie's reference to indigenous ghosts with particular import. At the same time, no identified Coast Salish individual appears on screen at any point in the series to mitigate the impression that Twin Peaks' first inhabitants have indeed disappeared, just as Seeathl foretold.

The overwhelming scholarly consensus on Chief Seeathl's speech, however, is that it is at least partly, and very possibly wholly, fictitious. These ominous words first appeared in print in 1887, after all, more than three decades after he allegedly spoke them, and over twenty years after his own death. And vanishing "red men" were symbolically central to Anglo-American musings, critical or otherwise, respecting the "manifest destiny" of settlers to displace Native Americans on the land. Despite the dubious authenticity of the speech itself, however, its ongoing cultural significance, alongside other Indian ghost stories, testifies to contemporary doubts and anxieties respecting the legitimacy of settler claims to the land and its resources. *Twin Peaks* is in fact only one of a large number of televisual and especially cinematic narratives based on or around Indian graveyards,

which function as unsettling reminders of past colonial sins. In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003), for instance, one of the main characters falls into the ruins of an abandoned mission and inadvertently unleashes a band of Chumash warrior spirits bent on revenge for historical injustices. The entire premise of *Outlaws* (1986-1987), meanwhile, centres on the crime-solving exploits of five 19th-century cowboys struck by lightning in a Comanche graveyard, and transported into the late-20th-century present.

Indian ghosts and graveyards are especially prevalent on the silver screen, however, no doubt owing to the fact that whereas television is by and large experienced within the “sanctity” of the home, within reach of children, the most potentially disturbing or disruptive cinematic phenomena have been experienced largely outside of this domain. The Native American burial ground on which *The Shining*’s (Stanley Kubrick, 1980) Overlook Hotel is built, for instance, sets the stage for the horrifying events that unfold in the film. Likewise for the Lutz family home in *Amityville Horror* (Stuart Rosenberg, 1979), built atop a Shinnecock graveyard. Similarly, although the wellspring of misfortune in *Pet Sematary* (Mary Lambert, 1989) is a World War II cemetery, in the original Stephen King novel (1983) it is a Micmac burial place that resurrects and irreparably transforms the pets and people interred therein, a setting moodily referenced in an instrumental soundtrack piece entitled “To the Micmac Grounds”. ; Renée Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (Hanover, NH and London: Dartmouth College Press, 2000) pp. 165-7.] A host of comparatively minor titles draw in much the same manner on haunted sites of buried Native American bodies or vengeful Indian ghosts. Even where these tropes are not named as such, allusions to the violent foundations of white settler livelihoods, as in *No Country for Old Men* (Joel and Ethan Coen, 2007), or to the retributive spirits, indigenous or otherwise, which constitute horror cinema’s stock-in-trade, recall an all-too-familiar set of anxieties and concerns.

BOB, the diabolical centre of violence in *Twin Peaks*, is not identified specifically in this way. The penitent former killer MIKE characterises BOB as a “fire spirit”, for instance, while Cooper’s hard-boiled Bureau colleague Albert Rosenfield muses that “perhaps BOB is just the evil men do.” *Twin Peaks Online*, however, cites Frost himself to the effect that “the idea for BOB originated in American Indian mythology and that he was a local evil spirit whose presence in the Twin Peaks area dates back to ancient times.” Carroll, finally, by way of comparison with indigenous figures in 19th-century American fiction, lists numerous ways in which BOB fits the “evil Indian archetype”, namely that he wears a “grimace” and “long oily hair”, uses “threatening postures”, and “dwells in the forest, beyond the perimeter of the village in, appropriately enough, Ghostwood Forest” – to which we might add BOB’s propensity for raping and murdering young white women. In any case, to the extent that *Twin Peaks* can be said to have brought cinematic conventions to bear on the relatively alien cultural terrain of early 1990s network

television, the series' adoption of a horror motif redolent with ghostly emissaries of colonial retribution might be safely added to this list of genre-bending innovations.

These reminders are of course applicable to the area surrounding Snoqualmie Falls 30 miles east of Seattle – *Twin Peaks*' Ghostwood – just as they are pertinent throughout the settler colonial world. Before European settlers arrived in this area in the mid-19th century, the Snoqualmie people controlled the river valley between present-day Monroe and North Bend, regulating trade between the Puget Sound coastal areas and the Cascade Mountains. The woods in this region were an important source of wild game, berries and edible roots, and also served as dwelling places for various spirits. The breath-taking falls themselves foregrounded in *Twin Peaks*' title sequence and throughout the series represented a site of particular significance. According to an account related by Snoqualmie Charlie (ca. 1850-?) to an early 20th-century anthropologist, two sisters married star beings, by whom one of them bore a son named Moon. After the women returned with Moon to earth, Dog Salmon kidnapped the baby and succeeded in raising the youth among his own people. Learning of this injustice in later life, Moon responded by transforming the Dog Salmon people into fish to feed his own tribe, and, returning to his homeland, proceeded to convert other spirit world entities into visible, material components of the phenomenal world: birds, shellfish, warm-blooded creatures, plants, fire, and others, including moonlight itself. Moon eventually came upon a fish weir, which he transformed into the Snoqualmie Falls as it is known today, addressing this new entity as follows: "You, Waterfall, shall be a lofty cataract. Birds flying over you will fall and people shall gather them up and eat them. Deer coming down the stream will perish and the people shall have them for food. Game of every kind shall be found by the people for their subsistence."

But when the U.S. Federal Government began granting plots of land in the Pacific Northwest to prospective settlers in the mid-19th century, Snoqualmie and others found themselves at the receiving end of hangings, shootings, and forced dispossession. In 1855, Snoqualmie representatives seeking a modicum of political stability, together with other Puget Sound-area peoples, lent their signatures to the Point Elliot Treaty, which promised to safeguard hunting, fishing and foraging rights, and also to allocate sizeable reserve properties for indigenous signatories in their traditional homelands. Yet as it happened, the government did not begin allocating much of this land in earnest until more than 30 years later, when there quite simply was not enough land remaining to honour treaty obligations. The only properties available through this scheme, in fact, were on small, temporary coastal reserves; and although some Snoqualmie did accept land there along with many other tribes, the lands were glaringly insufficient, on-reserve conditions were poor, and many Snoqualmie balked at the notion of abandoning their traditional inland territories for a marine coastal settlement. Meanwhile, those who continued to

inhabit their traditional territories were eventually driven off by settlers who had purchased the land from the state, and who cleared village sites for farms. Many Snoqualmie nonetheless continued to live in the area, obtaining low-paying work harvesting fruit, vegetables and hops, while exercising their lawful right to hunt, fish, and gather plants – though this activity was increasingly curtailed, such that individuals from Snoqualmie and other native groups could in fact be arrested and fined for pursuing their own Treaty rights. As for Snoqualmie Falls itself, a power company built an electric generator under the falls in 1898 and added a second downstream in 1910, which was expanded in 1957. Although Snoqualmie have never held formal title to the falls or its vicinity, it has remained a symbolically important site for meditating, bereaving lost loved ones, making important decisions, or obtaining spiritual sustenance for their children. The absence of governmental recognition in the form of tribal property rights from 1953 to 1999, in fact, arguably made the falling waters and their mists even more important as a locus of cultural identity.

Certainly, "Ghostwood" and its surrounds have never ceased to be a profoundly cultural place – and, for settlers, a deeply haunting one. Yet hauntings, too, are very often more than naval-gazing expressions of settler apprehension and self-reproach. As Colleen Boyd, Coll Thrush and Renée Bergland observe, because Indian ghost stories are often shaped by past and present struggles of first peoples themselves for political recognition, they are not unrelated to indigenous narratives of survival and resistance. But while the series borders on subverting its colonialist symbolism by giving voice to Seeathl's portentous reproof, *Twin Peaks*' overwhelming displacement of "the evil men do" from white colonisers onto a ferociously savage stereotype of indigenous masculinity is consistent with some of the oldest tropes of American settler colonialism; and whereas the series defers any direct reference to the facts of Puget Sound dispossession until the second last episode, BOB is the foremost menacing presence in the town from the onset. Certainly, in a series rife with uncanny doppelgängers and unexpected reversals, it is impossible to guess where series creators might have taken the storyline. In its extant form, however, *Twin Peaks* unquestionably does more to justify the annexation of indigenous land than it does to undermine this process.



Hawk leads the way to Jacques Renault's cabin (Episode 5: "Cooper's Dreams," directed by Lesli Linka Glatter, written by Mark Frost)

"Some of my best friends are white people"

We have seen how *Twin Peaks* uses images of an "evil Indian" to bolster a familiar narrative which vindicates the white presence on the land by transferring the sins of colonialism onto its dehumanised victims. This section discusses the way in which the series presses indigenous imagery into the service of more seemingly innocuous ends, particularly in the figure of a "good Indian" who assists *Twin Peaks*' white protagonists and provides spiritual insight into the hair-raising cosmic and transdimensional crises unfolding in the town. I maintain, however, that these representations make an equally significant cultural contribution to a still-unfolding history of colonialism in western Washington and elsewhere.

One would, not surprisingly, be hard-pressed to learn anything of this history from watching *Twin Peaks*. In fact, given the sheer number of cinematographic allusions to first peoples in the series, indigenous individuals named as such are markedly absent, with of course one very notable exception in the form of Deputy Hawk, acted by Michael Horse. Yet Horse does not identify as anyone from Snoqualmie or their Coast Salish relatives, but rather descends from Yaqui, Zuni and Apache peoples based in what is today known as the south-western United States and north-western Mexico, in addition to European and Hispanic ancestors. His screen avatar, meanwhile, appears to represent someone of

Blackfoot lineage, while a literary spin-off presents him (more truly to life) as the "[s]on of a Zuni Shaman".

Such particulars are, however, beside the point, because Hawk's primary function in the series is that of a generic Native American tasked with ameliorating settler guilt. When Lucy Moran's twin sister meets Hawk at the sheriff station, she unthinkingly addresses this elephant in the room. "God, after all we've done to you, how you must *hate* us white people", she tells Hawk, who replies – not entirely disavowing the veracity underlying her words – only that "some of my best friends are white people". Hawk's response is of a piece with his hackneyed personification as loyal Indian guide ardently devoted to his white patrons. Appropriately, he is also spiritually attuned, an expert tracker, and handy with a throwing knife to boot. Horse was no stranger to this role, moreover, having played Tonto in *The Legend of the Lone Ranger* (1981), a somewhat modernised version of the character by comparison with television and film versions of the Western crime-fighting duo from the 1940s and 1950s, which place Tonto in a distinctly servile relationship to his "white saviour". Aspects of Hawk's speech are in fact reminiscent of this earlier period. When, for instance, by way of describing Ronnette Pulaski's volatile condition following her near-death at the hand of BOB, he observes that "Body and spirit are still far apart", Hawk evinces traces of what has been called "Hollywood Injun English", in which ponderous breaks, a lack of auxiliary verbs, and missing words mark Indian speech as foreign and portray Anglo-Europeans as rightful inhabitants of the land. Parallels with an earlier, overtly racist, way of representing Native Americans are even more pronounced in the deputy's enigmatic reflections on "Blackfoot" philosophy: "Blackfoot legend. Waking souls that give life to the mind and the body. A dream soul that wanders." In many ways, then, both Hawk and Tonto are archetypal of what has been called the "White Man's Indian": they are representations, in other words, that bear far greater resemblance to settler colonial cultural priorities than they do to bona fide Native Americans, past or present.

The implausibility of Hawk as a flesh-and-blood Native American of any description is even more pronounced in the development of the Black and White Lodge plot elements. It is actually Major Garland Briggs who, drawing on his experience with Project Blue Book (a systematic U.S. Government study of UFOs), first brings the White Lodge to Cooper's attention during a camping trip in the woods, but Briggs disappears in a flash of white light before he can say anything further. The next day, however, it emerges that the White Lodge is also known to Hawk, who fills Cooper in:

> *Hawk: My people believe that the White Lodge is a place where the spirits that rule man and nature here reside.*

> *Sherriff Truman: Local legend, goes way back.*
>
> *Hawk: There is also the legend of a place called the Black Lodge, the shadow self of the White Lodge. Legend says that every spirit must past through there on the way to perfection. There you will meet your own shadow self. My people call it the Dweller on the Threshold. […] But it is said, if you confront the Black Lodge with imperfect courage, it will utterly annihilate your soul.*

The purportedly autochthonous origin of this "local legend" that "goes way back" has gone for the most part unquestioned. Indeed, there is no shadow of a hint from within the *Twin Peaks* televisual universe to do otherwise.

None of these concepts have anything to do with Snoqualmie or any other indigenous system of belief. The "Dweller on the Threshold" first appeared in the 19th-century English writer Edward Bulwer-Lytton's novel *Zanoni* (1842), and was taken up by the founder of Theosophy, Helena Blavatsky, who used this phrase to describe "certain maleficent astral Doubles of defunct persons". The White Lodge, moreover, was a name given by early 20th-century Theosophists to a group of spiritually advanced Tibetan masters charged with overseeing the spiritual evolution of humanity. The Black Lodge, on the other hand, may have been the coinage of the California-based Halcyon Society, whose circular *The Temple Artisan* remarked in 1909 upon the perpetual tension between the spiritually enriching work of the White Lodge, versus "the conscious satanic emissaries of the Black Lodge", who "take up their dwelling place in some man, or woman […] for the disruption, and dissociation of the body with which he or she was connected". All three concepts have been staples of Theosophy ever since.

Esoteric movements like Theosophy have been roundly criticised as bodies of thought wherein by and large self-appointed white intermediaries appropriate the ostensible spiritual authority of subject peoples, and wind up perpetuating received understandings of Eastern and indigenous cultures as essentially spiritual counterpoints to an atheistic, materialistic West. Scholarly reproaches have been especially forthright, however, with respect to appropriations that go by the critical epithets of "playing Indian" or "white shamanism", practices which occur almost always in parallel with processes of material and territorial dispossession, and frequently at the expense of silencing indigenous actors themselves.

Popular organisations like the Church of Gaia and exponents of New Age "alternative medicine" have been especially culpable in this kind of behaviour, but they have had their small-screen counterparts as well, particularly in the science fiction realm. In *The X-Files*

(1993-2002), for instance, FBI agent Fox Mulder forms bonds with Native Americans that vindicate his beliefs in magic, paranormal and extraterrestrial phenomena. “I sense you are different, FBI”, an Algonquin spiritual leader informs him, “You’re more open to Native American beliefs than some Native Americans. You even have an Indian name – Fox”. And in a later three-episode sequence involving the Navajo tribe, in which it is revealed that ancestral Pueblans were “ancient aliens”, Mulder undergoes a ceremonial healing ritual, is set apart visually by a red glow – alongside fellow agent Dana Scully – to indicate his special status as cultural intermediary, and both are ultimately rescued by Navajo oral culture when a translator bargains for their safe release by memorising the contents of a secret government document. *Star Trek: Voyager*’s (1995-2001) “Native American” first officer Chakotay (played by Robert Beltran, of Mexican descent), similarly bears out the series’ cosmic pretensions when, in a succession of flashbacks, he recalls a boyhood visit to his Central American ancestral tribe, the Rubber People (Olmec), who trace their descent to “Sky Spirits”. Likewise for the alien protagonists of *Roswell* (1999-2002), who come across a pendant with a symbol they recognise from their youth, and who, after undergoing a spiritual “test,” meet a mysterious Mescalero figure who identifies the cryptic necklace as that which belonged to a previous visitor from outer space. If such portrayals of Native Americans in sympathetic association with “modern” scientific and governmental authority do much to coalesce indigenous/non-indigenous cultural stereotypes, they also reproduce them with a vengeance.

In passing off scientistic and hermetic lore as Native American philosophy, *Twin Peaks* accomplishes a similar kind of cultural work. Frost has in fact openly admitted to deriving much of the “mythological side of *Twin Peaks*” from esoteric spirituality. “I’ve always known about the Theosophical writers and that whole group around the Order of the Golden Dawn in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century – W. B. Yeats, Madame Blavatsky and a woman called Alice Bailey, a very interesting writer”, he reflected in a 1992 interview. Given this source material, it is not surprising to see deep-space-expert Briggs’ revelation of “local legend” antedate Hawk’s and render it by implication superfluous. So too for the Blavatsky-esque role played by Cooper, who is able to leverage his knowledge of the East, Tibet especially, to discern the underlying unity between native beliefs and a cosmic-level struggle. Despite Hawk’s role as spiritual foil, it is Cooper who winds up being able to bridge governmental and spiritual domains in a way that Hawk simply can not. While Cooper summons his inner zen to catch Laura’s killer by throwing rocks at a bottle, for instance, Hawk is one of four bemused onlookers. And *Twin Peaks*’ stock authority on “local legend” is not even present on the scene when Cooper traverses the dimensional aperture into the Black Lodge itself. Hawk remains, literally and figuratively, a spectator to a white settler drama unfolding in – presumably – his own ancestral backyard, there only to lend tactical assistance, spiritual authenticity and “local flavour” to what the town’s Anglo-European experts already know.

Lynch and Frost did, it seems, make at least some effort to undermine conventional ways of representing Native Americans. When Hawk informs Cooper of the “Blackfoot legend” concerning “dream souls” who wander to the “land of the dead”, for instance, Cooper asks if the deceased Laura has also gone there. Hawk, transitioning from mystic to level-headed agnostic, observes that “Laura’s in the ground, Agent Cooper. That’s the only thing I’m sure of”. Similarly, after Cooper gives vent to his relationship woes at the sheriff station shooting gallery and discharges six perfectly-aimed rounds, Hawk recites a poem he wrote for his girlfriend, rife with natural metaphors: “One woman can make you fly like an eagle, another can give you the strength of a lion, but only one in the cycle of life can fill your heart with wonder and the wisdom that you have known a singular joy”. “Local gal?” Cooper asks, to which Hawk responds with her name: “Diane Shapiro, PhD Brandeis”. Cooper whistles, caught off-guard and clearly impressed. Even Hawk’s abovementioned declaration that “some of [his] best friends are white people”, which at once reiterates and reverses a common racist idiom, might be interpreted along the lines of what Mireille Rosello calls the “declining” of a stereotype through re-appropriation and ironic repetition. It is surely at least partly with these kinds of subtle, but no less destabilising, pokes at colloquial bigotry that Horse considers Hawk “[one] of the best Native American roles to ever be on television”.

Such characterisations are consistent with the transgressive, oft-cited “quirky allure” of *Twin Peaks*, However, other forms of Native American boilerplate are played unsmirkingly straight. We have already seen how the series utilises elements of “evil Indian” iconography to lend deadly seriousness to what is otherwise an off-the-wall mishmash of detective story, science fiction, and small-town soap opera. In this section I have shown how Hawk’s “good Indian” role, which provides this esoteric flight of fancy with a patina of Native American spiritual authenticity, draws similarly on a timeworn tendency to put indigenous iconography and identity to use for demonstrably non-indigenous purposes. In this case, not only does Hawk provide a friendship and alliance *vis à vis* “evil Indian” BOB that helps disavow the settler wrongdoings which underpin the violence in Twin Peaks in the first place; he also lends credence to colonialist projects of displacement and assimilation through his representation as culturally anterior to (Major Briggs’) scientific knowledge and superfluous to (Cooper’s) transcendental intuition and expertise. If BOB helps absolve white guilt by deflecting colonialism’s physical and territorial criminality against first peoples onto Native Americans themselves, Hawk mollifies settler scruples with respect to forced acculturation through the portrayal of indigenous ways of knowing as preliminary – albeit complementary – to more highly developed western systems of thought. Twenty-five years later, it seems worth asking whether *Twin Peaks*’ “quirky” expressions of aesthetic and intellectual incongruity are equal to the task of mitigating tropes that intrude with such onerous cultural magnitude.

Conclusion

Only months after Cooper's transcendent odyssey through the horrors of the Black Lodge and his cliff-hanger possession by BOB at the end of season two, Puget Power, the company in charge of operating the Snoqualmie Falls power generators, wanted to expand their facilities. To the Snoqualmie people, diverting additional water from this cherished site of religious and cultural identity represented yet another act of wanton colonialist sacrilege. But Snoqualmie had an unexpected ally in the form of the Citizens Opposed to the Offing of Peaks (COOP), a fan organisation committed to persuading ABC to revive the series for another season. As one of the group's founders explained, "Snoqualmie Falls is to 'Twin Peaks' as the boat is to 'Love Boat' […] that is the focal point. Showing the falls reminded viewers of the solace of the Northwest, soothing and empowering". COOP's influence on the process appears to have been, not surprisingly, minimal; in the end, it was a combination of church-, environmental-, and Snoqualmie-led protests, as well as the State Department of Ecology's refusal to grant the company additional water rights, that several years later convinced Puget Power to jettison its plans for enlarging capacity, in favour of converting to more efficient generators that used the same amount of water to produce more electricity. What is more, official recognition of Snoqualmie as a federal tribe in 1999 paved the way for some limited acknowledgement of their cultural jurisdiction over the falls, in the form of a 2005 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission decision mandating a significant increase in water flow over the falls during the months of May and June, when the culturally invaluable mists produced by the cascading waters are at their height. Meanwhile, tensions surrounding the development of lands encompassing the falls continue. Clearly, the COOP and Snoqualmie combined effort warrants scarcely a footnote in what has been a quarter century of predominantly indigenous-led anticolonial activism; it *did*, however, represent a largely unprecedented confluence of interests between *Twin Peaks* and the peoples whose ancestral lands provide so much of the show's scenic backdrop.

The season that COOP requested will, it seems, arrive – albeit significantly later than hoped for. The much anticipated third season of *Twin Peaks* will air not only in a Pacific Northwestern context of revivified Snoqualmie cultural identity, however, but also in a context of increasing global awareness of issues surrounding the appropriation of indigenous lands, knowledge, and iconography. In 2007, the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states quite explicitly, among other things, that first peoples have the right to control how their knowledge and cultural expressions, including visual arts, are used. Late 2012, moreover, saw the beginning of the pan-indigenous Idle-No-More campaign in Canada, which has since mushroomed into a global enterprise, and with which Horse has been involved. Although this movement is specifically concerned with relations between states and first peoples, particularly with

respect to land disputes and natural resource rights, it has also been caught up in a wider upsurge of indigenous grassroots activism pertaining to the representation of indigenous peoples in mainstream media. This activism has borne significant results, among the most well-known being a recent U.S. Patent and Trademark Office decision to revoke several Washington Redskins trademarks on the grounds that the team disparages Native Americans. This is not to suggest an equivalence between *Twin Peaks*' portrayal of native peoples and what is, after all, a flagrant racial slur. But such developments do suggest a very changed cultural landscape, such that it is rather more difficult now than it was when Laura Palmer's blue-lipped remains first washed on shore and into pop-cultural posterity, to play fast and loose with indigenous stereotypes.

While *Twin Peaks* spectators and Snoqualmie peoples could lend their collective energies to mitigating the consequences of Snoqualmie falls development, however, it is unclear whether a similar conjunction of indigenous and non-indigenous interests can be brought to bear on how first peoples are represented in the series' long-awaited third instalment. For, given the show's emphasis on behavioural caricature and ironic juxtaposition, its ontological shuffling between the realms of wakefulness and dreams, exterior and interior selves, and its spatially indefinite horizons of criminality – from a local forest to the outer reaches of the known universe – *Twin Peaks*' use of threadbare settler colonial archetypes plays a key role in preventing the narrative from spiralling into deep space, careening into endless psychoanalytical ricochet, or devolving into Dadaist absurdity. It is difficult, in fact, to imagine a series which parodied its own characters' overwrought romantic sincerity with a parallel soap opera (*Invitation to Love*), without the kind of narratological comforts provided by formulaic burlesques on – in this case – territorially and culturally dispossessed Native Americans. It remains to be seen whether the 21st-century rendition of *Twin Peaks* can retain any semblance of aesthetic or sequential continuity with its 20th-century predecessor without breeding a similarly straight-faced allegiance to such outmoded, and, now more than ever, highly contested cultural forms.

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Endnotes